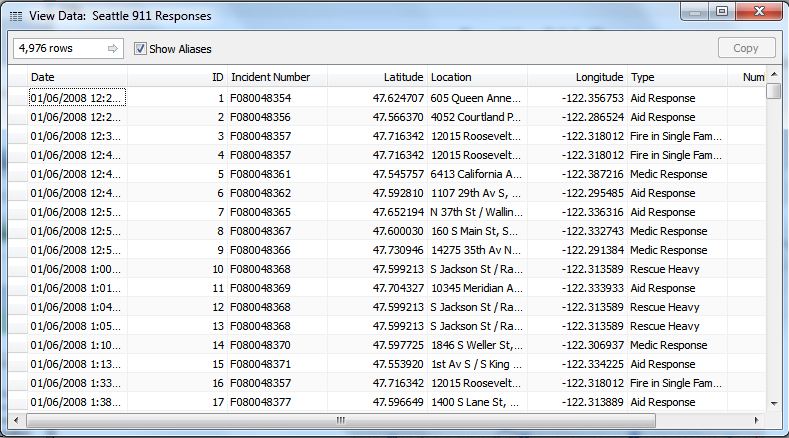
**Tableau – Lab Report**

**First thoughts:**

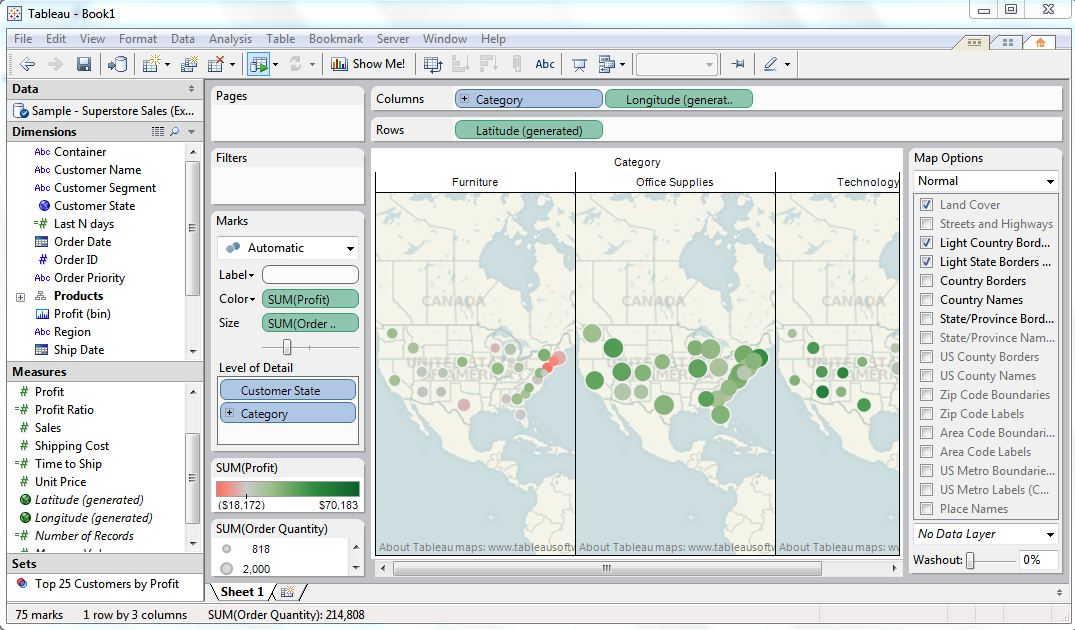
My purpose for exploring Tableau is to find software for visualization that will allow for eye catching visualization without sacrificing the integrity of my data with little or no requirement for coding.

Upon opening up Tableau, you’re presented with a section called “workbook,” which shows any recent workbooks you’ve worked on by providing a ‘one click’ selection for quick access to previous work. On the left panel there is a saved data connection – providing one quick section to various data sources. To begin you need to connect to data: 1. Go to data menu 2. Select connect to data. The difference between Tableau personal versus professional is the access to data.

For the purpose of my final assignment, I connected to the excel spreadsheet in ‘Data sources’ within the tableau repository which was automatically set up during the software installation. Data connection allows flexibility on how you want to connect to your data: 1. Connect live 2. Import all data 3. Import some data. Once connected; Tableau reads and places different items into ‘Dimensions’ and ‘measures’; Measures creates axis and dimensions creates labels. Dimensions slices the data and measures are the values you do calculations on



**Interface**



The Tableau toolbar bears similarity to a typical windows interface and the MS excel-like tabs at the bottom to open new worksheet. This makes learning the software somewhat easier for those familiar with the windows interface and excel. Below the toolbar are quick ‘one click’ options for columns and rows defined as shelves. The ‘Show me’ feature provides a quick look at possible visualizations based on selections made in Dimensions and measures. By hovering over the examples, Tableau provides a quick tip as to why that particular type of visualization is recommended. The greyed out section – provides reasons why it is not available for the data set you’re working on. This is especially helpful for someone new to visualization. Upon choosing the recommended view tableau presents the visualization. While the feature of drag and drop fields onto the work area allows for ease of use for the beginner, the overall task of creating a visualization is even made simpler by the software providing the most suitable visualization type depending on the type of data to work with. Multiple visualizations can be combined onto one dashboard, whereby one search filter can connect to charts, maps, and graphs including joining underlying data tables. Compared to R, the drag, and drop interface of tableau is simpler than manually coding in JavaScript or R. This can be encouraging for users to try different types of visualizations with their data set.

**Not as easy as it looks!**

Despite the functionality of Tableau, the learning curve is not quite as easy as it would first appear. In my attempt to use my own data set in Excel, I was required to sort the columns and rows in such a way that Tableau could interpret the data for an intelligible visualization. Unlike Open Paths which allows the user privacy of data, you can’t save your unfinished work without the risk exposure prior to completion as saved work resides in the public website. To Tableau’s credit, the site does not explicitly expose your work unless your individual URL entered.

**Conclusion**

While Tableau allows for some beautiful visualization coupled with the ability to provide various graphing and mapping tools, I’m opting to continue to explore the software to gain some insight as to how I might to choose to do my final assignment in print. Tableau’s ‘Show Me’ feature has helped me gain some understanding of how I might choose to layout my visualization in print format. For my final assignment, I’m opting to use various graphs to support a ‘heat map’ as it relates to energy consumption, environmental footprint, and some form of measure for ‘sustainability’ (energy expended versus our carrying capacity, individual versus the population).